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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001793

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TAGS: PREL PTER PREF PBTS SNAR AF PK TU  
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN: CONSTRUCTIVE START TO  
ANKARA DECLARATION FOLLOW-UP

REF: ANKARA 1029

Classified By: Polcouns Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 b, d

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. On July 6, Ankara hosted the first meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Turkey Joint Working Group (JWG), established by the leaders of the three countries at their April 2007 summit meeting in Ankara. The deputy foreign minister-level meeting identified various confidence building measures aimed at improving the level of cooperation and trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Future JWG meetings will review implementation of the commitments made in the Ankara Declaration, which emerged from the April Summit meeting. The JWG did not formally establish a date for the next leaders summit, though MFA expects such a meeting to take place by early next year. The JWG will meet again, in Istanbul, ahead of the next summit. The Turkish side also suggested a meeting of the foreign ministers of the three countries be held on the margins of the upcoming UN General Assembly, September 2007, in New York. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On July 8 MFA U/S Ertugrul Apakan provided a readout on the deputy foreign minister-level meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey, held in Ankara, July 7. This was the first meeting of the so-called Joint Working Group (JWG), established by the leaders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey to monitor the implementation of the commitments made in the Ankara Declaration, which they issued at their trilateral summit, on April 30, 2007. Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Kabir Farahi, Pakistan Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan, and Apakan represented the

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three sides. President Sezer and FM Gul received the participants.

¶3. (C) According to Apakan, the talks were constructive. Following their April approach, the Turks encouraged both sides to focus on commonalities, rather than on differences. They agreed on a number of specific steps, most of which are spelled out in the joint press release they issued at the end of the talks (see para 7). These include:

- Joint chambers of commerce meetings;
- Joint GOT training for Afghan and Pakistani officials on military and security matters, including combating drug trafficking and terrorism;
- Conducting feasibility studies of joint projects in coordination with the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA);
- Establishing cooperative mechanisms on early warning of natural disasters and on meteorological data exchange;
- Promoting parliamentary, academic and other people-to-people contacts;

-- Promoting media exchanges; and,  
-- Recommending to the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission that it look into matters related to transportation, transit, and customs.

¶4. (C) In a separate briefing, Deputy Director General for South Asia Babur Hizlan told us of the Pakistan side's reluctance to issue any document following the JWG, a step they eventually agreed to after an intervention by President Sezer. Turkey tried to advance the idea of a joint meeting of National Security Advisors -- a suggestion Hizlan says he received from A/S Boucher during his June visit to Washington. The Pakistan side opposed the suggestion. Hizlan indicated that since Afghan experts are already being trained by Turkey in the Ankara Center of Excellence on Defense against Terrorism, and the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime, the two sides agreed to joint training of experts from both countries in Turkey. While the joint press release refers to the possibility of parliamentary exchanges, Hizlan told us that Pakistan rejected specific proposals for such exchanges due to upcoming elections there. The Afghan side, for its part, was very willing to go along with most suggested confidence building measures.

¶5. (C) Hizlan noted the continued opposition of the Pakistan side to any reference to the border. Indeed, he said the Pakistan side was seriously disturbed by the July 13 Hollings Center-sponsored conference on the Durand line, being held in Istanbul. While Apakan told the Ambassador that TIKA will look at border-region projects -- citing the possibility of an initiative like the Erez industrial zone project the GOT has been pursuing for some time in Gaza -- the Pakistan DCM told us that focusing on the border restricts the parties and "gives the wrong impression that something is especially wrong." Joint projects, he said, could be taken anywhere.

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The Pakistan DCM also emphasized that dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan is already taking place in numerous fora and on various issues, describing the Turkey-led process as a reiteration of the two countries' resolve to maximize their partnership.

¶6. (C) The leaders, in the Ankara Declaration, already agreed to meet again at a summit towards the end of 2007 or early 2008. No specific date is included in the joint statement. All sides believe the next summit will be held in Turkey, where it should remain until the mechanism is better institutionalized. The joint press release does suggest a meeting of the foreign ministers of the three countries be held on the margins of the upcoming UN General Assembly, September 2007, in New York.

TEXT OF THE JOINT PRESS RELEASE (AS POSTED ON THE MFA WEBSITE)

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¶7. (U) BEGIN TEXT:

7 July 2007, Joint Declaration Regarding the First Meeting of the Joint Working Group Established by Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (Unofficial MFA Translation)  
The First Meeting of the Joint Working Group established by the Ankara Declaration of 30 April 2007, was convened in Ankara on 6 July 2007 with the participation of Mr. Mohammad Kabir Farahi, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mr. Riaz Mohammad Khan, the Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Mr. Ertugrul Apakan, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

The members of the Joint Working Group were received by H.E. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, President of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Abdullah Gl, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

During the talks, progress on the conclusions of the Ankara Declaration was reviewed in accordance with the mandate given

by the Presidents of the three countries. Afghanistan and Pakistan delegations have reported on the developments and the number of high-level contacts since the Ankara Summit. In this framework, various confidence building measures aimed at improving and strengthening the climate of trust and cooperation between them were taken up. Furthermore, the existing mechanisms of cooperation and consultation in such fields as combating extremism, terrorism, drug trafficking as well as in the fields of economic, cultural and security cooperation, were considered.

In this context, the Turkish side suggested a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the three countries at the margins of the upcoming 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2007 in New York.

The Turkish side offered to hold meetings between the apex bodies of chambers of commerce and industry of the two countries on the invitation of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey.

The Joint Working Group discussed and agreed to the following suggestions:

-- Participation of the mid-level Afghan and Pakistani experts in the courses organized at the Center of Excellence on Defense Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) in Ankara.

-- Participation of officials from relevant law-enforcement authorities of both countries in courses offered by the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC).

-- Conducting feasibility studies for joint projects identified by the two governments with the assistance of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA).

Afghanistan and Pakistan sides also agreed on the following confidence building measures:

-- To enhance the security cooperation through established mechanisms, especially to deny sanctuary, training and financing to terrorists and to elements involved in subversive and anti-state activities in each other's country and to initiate immediate action on specific intelligence exchanges in this regard.

-- To recommend to the ministerial level Joint Economic Commission between the two countries to look into the matters related to transportation, transit and customs.

-- To promote cooperation for exchange of programs in the media with a view to strengthening the brotherly relations between the two countries.

-- To establish cooperation in early warning against natural disasters and exchange of relevant information including meteorological cooperation.

-- To promote people to people contacts and exchanges including among the parliamentarians, journalists and

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academicians of the two countries especially through official channels.

The meeting, which was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, constituted a significant step on the path of institutionalized dialogue and cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

The Joint Working Group will hold its next meeting in Istanbul before the Second Summit.

The delegations of Afghanistan and Pakistan expressed thanks for the warm hospitality extended to them by the Turkish side.

Ankara, 7 July 2007

END TEXT.

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